

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 26597 131629Z

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-03 /016 W  
-----077701 140023Z /64

R 131615Z SEP 77  
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8510

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 26597

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: AL, CFED  
SUBJECT: APPROACH TO ALBANIANS REGARDING  
VERIFICATION OF DEATH: SUCCESS?

REF: A) PARIS 16520 B) STATE 94908 AND PREVIOUS

1. TO OUR GREAT SURPRISE EMBOFF WAS CALLED IN BY  
QUAI'S ALBANIAN DESK THIS WEEK AND HANDED A COPY  
OF THE ALBANIAN CERTIFICATE OF DEATH OF MRS.  
NIFODORA BAFKA WHICH WE HAD SOUGHT IN VAIN TO OBTAIN  
OVER THE LAST 10 MONTHS.

2. EVEN CURIOSER IS THE FACT THAT THE CERTIFICATE,  
CAREFULLY TRANSLATED FROM THE ALBANIAN ORIGINAL INTO  
ENGLISH ("...IT IS HEREBY CERTIFIED THAT NIFHODORA  
BAFKA IS CANCELLED BECAUSE HAS DIED...") WAS HANDED  
TO THE FRENCH EMBASSY IN TIRANA FOR ATTESTATION ON  
MAY 2, THAT IS A MONTH BEFORE THE QUAI OFFICIALLY  
AGREED TO TRY TO HELP US IN THIS CASE.

3. THE QUAI'S ALBANIAN DESK (MADAME BATBEDAT)  
HAS PROMISED TO MAKE FURTHER INQUIRIES OF THE FRENCH  
EMBASSY IN TIRANA EXACTLY WHY AND HOW THE CERTIFICATE  
CAME TO BE ATTESTED AT THE FRENCH EMBASSY, WHICH  
EVIDENTLY SENT IT TO PARIS ONLY AFTER IT LEARNED  
THAT WE WERE INTERESTED IN IT. FOR THE PRESENT

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BOTH MADAME BATBEDAT AND WE ASSUME THAT THE  
BAFKA FAMILY MADE AN INDEPENDENT APPROACH TO THE  
ALBANIANS, AS THE DEPARTMENT HAD EARLIER ADVISED;  
THAT TIRANA, HEARING OF THE REPEATED EFFORTS WE  
WERE MAKING IN THIS MATTER WITH THE ALBANIAN  
EMBASSY, MAY HAVE PUT TWO AND TWO TOGETHER; AND THAT,  
ARRANGING TO HAVE THE CERTIFICATE ATTESTED BY THE

FRENCH EMBASSY, TIRANA MIGHT HAVE WANTED TO MAKE  
SURE THAT WE GOT OUR ANSWER TOO -- WITHOUT  
TALKING TO US ABOUT IT DIRECTLY.

4. OBVIOUSLY MUCH OF THIS IS CONJECTURE AND NOT  
MUCH SHOULD BE MADE OF IT. IT IS INTERESTING,  
NEVERTHELESS, THAT THE ALBANIANS DID FINALLY REACT.  
MADAME BATBEDAT'S OVERALL CURRENT IMPRESSION IS  
THAT THEY ARE MORE NERVOUS THAN EVER AND  
PARTICULARLY APPALLED BY TITO'S TRIP TO MOSCOW AND  
WARM RECEPTION IN PEKING. THUS, WHILE THEIR SENSE  
OF SECURITY IS CONTINUING TO ERODE, THEY REMAIN  
CAUGHT UP IN THE STRAIGHTJACKET OF THEIR PAST.  
IT MAY WELL BE A TIME FOR FURTHER DELICATE AND SLOW  
PROBING.

5. WE ARE POUCHING THE COPY OF THE CERTIFICATE TO  
NICK ANDREWS, EUR/EE, AND WOULD BE INTERESTED TO  
KNOW WHETHER THE BALKA FAMILY IN FACT ALREADY HAS  
OBTAINED THIS CERTIFICATE DIRECTLY AS WE  
SUSPECT -- WITH OR WITHOUT FRENCH ATTESTATION.  
HARLAN

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## Message Attributes

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**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
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